



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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‘CRIPA’ DISMISSED
U.S. Department of Justice Dismisses Arizona ADJC Case

PHOENIX – The U.S. Department of Justice has dismissed the case against the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) regarding a Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA) investigation that began in June 2002.

Governor Janet Napolitano made that announcement today, adding, “This is a tremendous achievement for Director Michael Branham and the team at ADJC. Most importantly, it marks great progress in the way Arizona helps children recover and return to society.”

The Department of Justice issued its first CRIPA report January 23, 2004, which found challenges in the way the agency provided services and protection to youth offenders. Consultants were hired to assess the Department’s compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the state of Arizona signed in September 2004.

The consultants’ findings focused on five main issue areas: suicide prevention, juvenile justice, education, medical care and mental health and rehabilitative services. Sixteen remedial measures, detailed in the Agreement, were recommended to resolve the identified deficiencies.

Since that time, DOJ has monitored ADJC. A new report, issued September 15, 2007, shows that ADJC has achieved substantial compliance in all reporting areas of the CRIPA agreement.

“We are on the right track, but the hard work is just beginning,” said ADJC Director Michael Branham, who focused on this case immediately upon appointment as director. “This does not take away from all we have accomplished, which is enormous. But it is very important for each of us to understand that we have more hard work ahead of us and there is still a lot to be done.”

ADJC continues to reform its practices and implement new programming. The changes enacted since the Department of Justice first issued its CRIPA report in January 2004 have been dramatic. Improvements were made in all key areas at the three juvenile correctional facilities covered under the Agreement. Important enhancements were made in the areas of Education, Youth Grievances, Medical Services, Suicide Prevention, Quality Assurance and Inspections & Investigations.

Branham added, “Sustainability and complacency are two of our worst enemies. We can never take for granted issues like safety, security and the fragile nature of the troubled kids in our system.”

ADJC is dedicated to every youth's success, with the goal to return youth back to society as productive citizens. The Department continues to move toward its vision of: "Safer Communities through Successful Youth."

The entire report can be viewed on the ADJC Web site, www.azdjc.gov.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.